

## EXPERIMENT 1

## QUESTIONS

1. *Is my Christian life*  
 2. *growing by heart prayer?*  
 3. *Is my heart enlarged in love, duty*  
 4. *and secret prayer?*

RICHARD MAYO, late  
of Kingston upon Thames.

Ps. 18. *Reichen do, O Lord, and  
rest upon thy Name.*

LONDON.

the Bible and *First Chronicles* at the lower end of Chappin, 1887.

14(42)

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Imprimatur,

Ex *Aed Lamb.*  
Febr. 11. 1663.

Geo. Stradling S. T. P.  
Rev. in Christo Patri  
D. Gilb. Archiepsc.  
Cant. à. Sac. Domest.

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To the READER.

Reader,

Was the more willing to print this Letter  
(though penn'd at first for the closet of a  
particular Friend, and not in a fit dress  
to come abroad) because it contains an  
answer to a Question that every Christian is  
to ask, and none (so far as I can learn) did  
yet undertake to resolve; or if any have  
equely touch'd it, never any did directly  
handle it.

A small Structure must not have a great  
roof: I shall only suggest these two preli-  
minary Exhortations.

1. Be much in the duty of Secret Prayer; be  
present at it as at your (a) meals. Amongst  
your motives, this is one. 'Tis a duty wherein  
doth ordinarily make the greatest dis-  
covery of himself: Joseph and his Brethren  
met alone when he made himself known to them.  
The secrets of the Lord are usually revealed  
to his People when they are seeking him in  
prayer; then 'tis, that he gives them his (b)  
presence, when they fall down upon their knees un-  
to him, he falls upon their necks and kisseth  
them. (c) They are never less alone than  
when alone.

a Morn-  
ing,  
evening,  
and  
noon-  
day. So  
David.  
Joachim  
the father  
of the  
Virgin  
Mary,  
used to  
say, That  
Prayer

his meat and drink. See Daniel's practice, Dan. 6. 10.  
anima sancta sola esto, anne nescis vererendum te habere spon-  
tem? Nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus.

## To the Reader.

### 2. Be warm and lively in the Duty.

dead prayer is no more accepted with God, than of old the offering up of a beast that was found dead in a ditch. The Ass under the Law was not to be offered unto God, but his neck must be broke; not that God was angry with the creature which was the workmanship of his hands, but to shew how distastful a dull and dead heart is to him in his service. Sometimes Christians go to prayer as sick persons to the meals, because they must eat, and 'tis dinner time, and the like; not that they desire delight in their food, or find any refreshment thereby. If it be thus with thee in respect to Prayer, thou art greatly distempered, and thy condition is very dangerous, therefore look speedily for help. May this following Letter contribute something therunto: the LORD set in with it for that end.



A PLAIN,

## ANSWER

TO THIS

Practical QUESTION,

What course may a Christian take to  
have his heart quickned and enlarg-  
ed in the Duty of Secret Prayer?

Christian Friend,

**Y**OUR Question favours  
of a Spirit truly gracious.  
It supposeth you already  
convinced of, and per-  
swaded to the practice  
of that necessary, though  
neglected, Duty of Se-  
cret Prayer. It shews, you do not take up  
a bare performance of Duty, as too  
many do, not caring how or in what man-  
ner it be performed. It argues you would  
not God with the *Male of your flock*, and  
let him off with a corrupt thing. These  
are good signs of sincerity.

A 3

I

I could heartily wish that all Christians would follow your example, to propose such profitable Questions as may promote

(a) 2 Tim. Piety, and to avoid Such (a) foolish questions as do engender strifes.  
2. 23.

I would not be wanting to you in so pious a request as this is: And oh that I could say

(b) 1 Joh. that (b) *What I here declare unto you I have seen and felt my self*; that what is here expressed, is the same which I my self have experienced.  
1. 3.

It is besides your desire and my design to write concerning the duty of Secret Prayer

(c) Cobbet at large; to open the nature of it, to shew his practical Discourse of Prayer, the necessity of it, to lay down arguments to move you to it, to advise in what manner you should manage it; namely, with Faith, with fervency, with humility, with sincerity, with constancy, with watchfulness, with the Spirit, and the like: this work is done in my hand in many Treatises, and those abundant, some of them, (c) in our own Language. I shall therefore strictly keep to the Question propounded, which I acknowledg is your greatest concernment. God is a living God, and they that worship him must worship him with warmth and (d) life; such supplicants he seeketh after.  
(c) Cobbet his practical Discourse of Prayer, Philip Goodwin his Family Religion revived, from pag. 149, to 155.

(d) Ejusmodi cultum probat Deus qui ejus naturae congruit. Meet helps then in this case are such as follow.  
Cal. in Joh. 4. 23.

1. Remember to observe the fittest season for the performance of this duty. Though Christ

Christian is to pray at all times, yet at all times he is not alike fit for Prayer. This you find by experience. 1. As many a fair Child is lost by an untimely birth, so many a good duty is marr'd by an undue timing of it.

Of many apt seasons, I shall mention these three.

1. When you meet with any new occurrence of Providence. Every fresh dispensation of Providence is a provocation unto Prayer. When any affliction befalls thee, then fall down before God, and humble thyself under his afflicting hand. (e) *Is any amongst you afflicted? let him pray,* says the Apostle; that is, Let him then do it more especially, then there is a fit opportunity for it. (e) James 5. 13.

*Præsertim curandum est*

*curies aliquâ rerum angustia, aut ipsi premimur, aut premi alii videmus, ut ad Deum citatis, non pedibus, sed animis recurramus. Deinde, ne quam aut nostrum aut aliorum prosperitatem præferre sinamus; quin laude, ac gratiarum actione, manum ejus agnoscere nos testemur. Cal. Instit. lib. 3.*

Again, when any fresh mercy is conferred upon thee, then it is a fit season to go aside and to acknowledg thine unworthiness, and to express thy thankfulness. See an excellent instance for this in 2 Sam. 7. 18. the words are these, *Then went King David in, and lay before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* Mark that particle,

then. Why when was it? See the foregoing verse, when God by *Nathan* had made many Promises and that of great Mercies to him, then he went in, and sat before the Lord, and said; *Who am I? &c.*

The Reader may dilate his thoughts upon this, and the following particulars: I intend only brief hints.

2. When you find the Spirit of God moving upon your Soul, and exciting you to the duty, then it is a fit season for it: Now God calls upon you to come and converse with him, he invites you now to communion with himself. Think at such a time, that the Lord bespeaks you in such a manner as he doth the Spouse, *Cant. 2. 10. Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away; Or as 'tis vers. 14. Come let me hear thy voice, for it is sweet.* To pray at such a season is to hoise up sail before the wind; it is like rowing both with wind and tide, being thus excited by the Spirit, you may expect the assistance of it: If Prayer be now neglected, the Spirit of God is quenched; and I'll pronounce him a novice in Religion, or rather a stranger to it altogether, that doth not confess it necessary to the lively performance of this Duty, that the Spirit of God doth act and quicken him therein. Our motions are exceeding dull and heavy in holy duties, when the Spirit of God doth not help our infirmities. Whensoever therefore God says by the secret  
whil-

whisperings of his Spirit, *Seek my Face,*  
 hearts should answer and eccho back as  
*David did, Thy face, O Lord, we will seek.*  
 Yet here I would have it remembred, I do  
 not say a Christian should never pray, but  
 when he finds the Spirit of God egging him  
 forward; this hath been the grots mistake  
 of some, who hereupon have discontinued  
 the duty for several days together, because  
 they have not perceived the Spirit moving  
 them thereunto: No, let this be thy pra-  
 ctice, to wait upon God in his way, and it  
 may be the Spirit of God will meet thee  
 therein. Know this, though the Spirit of God  
 should not put forth his hand to lead thee,  
 yet the Word of God holds forth a precept  
 to command thee, and set thou about the  
 duty out of pure obedience to the command  
 of God. It may be e're thou art awate,  
*thou wilt find him whom thy Soul desires.*  
 Though the Spirits assistance be never un-  
 welcome to a Child of God, yet many times  
 it comes unexpected. *Abraham* saw not the  
*Lam* for the Sacrifice till he was in the  
 Mount. Often in the Mount in the time of  
 prayer, the Spirit of the Lord is seen and  
 felt. Mariners have put forth to Sea in a  
 calm, when they have made but little way,  
 and anon they have met with an unexpe-  
 cted gale of wind, that hath brought them  
 with full sail to their desired haven. I leave  
 you to apply it.

Again,

Again, I do not deny but the evil Spirit who is *God's Ape*, may sometimes transform himself into the likeness of *God's Spirit*, and may excite a Christian to this Duty: but then his motions are irregular and unreasonable; they tend to the hindering of him from another, and (for that time) a more reasonable duty; suppose it a work of mercy to himself, or others, or such like. Christian exercises must be wisely subordinated one to another; whereas the Devil desires to make them interfere, and to set them at variance.

3. When we find our hearts in a settled and composed frame, then also it is a fit season for secret prayer, when *g* (as *David's*) *our hearts are fixt*, and not pre-occupied with any secular matters. To pray at another time is like playing upon an instrument that is out of tune; what harsh and displeasing melody doth it make? Many when they go to seek God, they have their heart to seek.

(g) Psalm 57. 7. *our hearts are fixt*, and not pre-occupied with any secular matters. To pray at another time is like playing upon an instrument that is out of tune; what harsh and displeasing melody doth it make? Many when they go to seek God, they have their heart to seek.

(b) 2 Sam. 7. 27. In Few can say with *David* that (b) *they have found their hearts to pray*. We render it *he found in his heart*, but it may be read, *he found his heart to pray a prayer unto God*.

(i) Usually in the morning the mind is most composed; then a man meets with least stom of the Heathens to address themselves in the morning early to their Idols, *vid. Herod. l. 10.* The primitive Christians were wont to be early at their devotions. *Vid. Pl. Ep. 57. ad Trajan. Tertul. Apol. c. 2.* See *Christ's practice; Marc. 1. 35. Qui mane surgit precandi causa, dicit manicare Deum. Druf.*

diver-

diversions in duty; the evenings repose hath in great part discharged the mind of all that did distract it: and it were well if we would be with God as soon as we awake: if we did offer up to him the first fruits of every day; if as soon as we lift our bodies off our beds, we did in prayer lift up our souls to God. This was *David's* manner, *Psal.* 5. 3.

Under this Head I will suggest these three cautionary Rules.

1. Do not take prayer in hand when you have any other matter in hand: if so, your *attendance upon God* must needs be *with distraction*, and your heart will be stolen from you, do what you can. Set by all worldly occasions when you set about this duty: say to them as *(k)* *Abraham* did to his young *(k)* *Gen.* men, *Stay you here while I go aside to worship* 22. 5. *God.*

2. Do not ordinarily go to prayer when your anger is stirred, and your mind full of perturbations; if you do, 'tisten to one but you will offer up the *sacrifice of a fool*, and *speake unadvisedly with your lips*. The *(l)* *(l)* *1 Tim.* Apostle's advice is, that we lift up to God holy 2. 8. *hands without wrath.* *(m)* *God was not in the* *(m)* *1 Kings* *wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire* 19. 11, 12. *that passed by Elijah, but in the still small voice.* And you must be of still and quiet spirits, if you will see or find him.

3. Do not usually engage in prayer when you are inclin'd to sleep and drowsiness; if  
so

(s) Matt.  
20. 40, 41.

so, you are like to make but dull and drow-sie work of it. (n) The rebukes of *Christ* could not awake Disciples to prayer when their hearts *were heavy and asleep*. You must be wakeful when you pray, if you would *watch unto prayer*.

2. A second help is this: Allot and set out a due proportion of time for this Duty. It is not enough to choose a fit time for prayer, but you must allow sufficient time to prayer. No Service, whether secular or spiritual can be done well, unless you allow a due proportion of time for the doing of it. How is prayer huddled and slubbered over many times for want of this? you think of making an end as soon as you begin, you are straightned in your prayers, because you are straightned in your time.

*Qu.* If you should ask, How much time must a Christian set apart in a day for secret prayer?

*Ans.* In my Answer I must have respect to the callings and conditions of Christians; that time is sufficient for one, which is not sufficient for another. 'Tis observable, that under the Law there were different Sacrifices for the rich and for the poor. God required that Mens Sacrifices should hold some proportion with their abilities. And by parity of reason, God looks that the rich, and those that have little else to do, should double the time of the poor in prayer, and of those



those whose callings call for their continual attendance.

And yet I must add this too, let a mans condition be never so mean, and let his employment be never so urgent, it will not be a sufficient Apology for his neglecting or curtailing the duty of Prayer. (o) Time (o) Col. must be redeem'd, and that for this very end, 4. 2. to hold communion with GOD in this comp. Duty. with 5.

This premised, I come to the Question, wherein I may not be positive; that would be an unwarrantable presumption. I have often thought that one hour in four and twenty, is as little as any one can set apart for secret prayer. (p) And if this should seem to any a hard saying, I desire they would consider, whether they don't spend two every day about things less necessary. Let them cast up the time they cast away (more than they need) in sleeping, eating, and drinking; then let them add thereunto the time they spend in sports, or recreations, in idle visits, in unprofitable studies or musings, and in empty chat, or conference with friends and neighbours; and see if the product will not be so much, or more: and will any that name the name of Christ, grudge an hour in a

(p) Luther spent three hours in prayer every day, see *Vitus Theod. in Vita ejus.* Judge Cook advised to four in a day; *Sex horas; semper, totidem die legibus aquas;*

*Quatuor orabis, deo epulisque duas. Quod superest sacris nitro largire campanis.* King Alfred divided every day into three parts; he allowed eight hours to his devotion, eight to his employment, and eight to his sleep and refection.

day

day for prayer, when they can spend two, or it may be, more in the meer pleasing of the Flesh? is this consistent with Christianity?

Won't such be filled with horror (as many others for the same reason have been) at the hour of Death? Can they answer it at that day when God will reckon with them for every talent he hath entrusted them with, and for that of time in particular?

(q) One dreadfully schrieht out on her Death-bed these words, *A World of Wealth for an inch of time.*

Another when Friends comforted her as she lay a dying, said; *Call time a gain; no comfort unless you can call time a gain.*

*Chrysostom prayed, Inducias Domine usque ad mane.*

If this Letter should fall into the hands of any person, who hath resolved, or doth resolve to redeem an hour or more every day for secret prayer; let him consider, whether it would not help to quicken and enlarge his heart, if he did morning, or evening, or when he finds himself best disposed thereto, enter into his Closet and turn up an hour-glass, and purpose within himself, to see the last sand run out, before he gave out or left praying. I do not propose this as an every days practice, but at some certain seasons only. It hath I confess its inconveniences, but withal it hath its advantages: hereby the heart is engaged more firmly to the work. Now it will not put by the present opportunity by propounding another. If thy heart be as mine, it is apt to say to thee when at prayer, as *Felix* said to *Paul*, Go thy way for this time, and come again at a more convenient season. And further, thou wilt fall to the duty with the more fervency; for thus thou wilt reason with thy self; So much

each time I am resolved to spend in this service, and I were better spend it in wrestling with God, than in trifling with God and with prayer: I were better do the business of hand with all my might, and stir up my self to call upon God, for during such a space of time I resolve to do nothing else.

I know 'tis the opinion of (r) many, that, some persons do by their meals, they eat little and often; so Christians should do by their Prayers. And in case of great indisposition I judge it advisable; when they have laboured a while and can catch nothing, they may take up their nets, and mend them against another season, and yet I will not discommend such a one that resolves he will catch something, or he will toil all night; but purposeth in his heart (as (s) one once did) that he will not go from God without God.

(r) *Dicuntur fratres in Aegypto crebras orationes habere & eas brevissimas, ne illa vigilantia evanescat, que oranti plurimum necessaria est, per prodigiosiores motus evanes-*

atque habetur intentio, Aug. ad Prob. *Cassian* makes mention of some in his time, *qui utilius censebant, breves quidem orationes sed creberrimas fieri.* (s) *Nunquam ab te absque te discedam.* *Æmilius* being to fight with the *Macedonians*, would not give over sacrificing to his god *Hercules*, till he had some sign of Victory.

3. Another Help to this Duty is, to take pains with your heart beforehand, to prepare it thereunto, 'tis usually from the neglect of preparation, that we find such deadness and indisposition in secret prayer. Alas! the heart is not all on a sudden lifted up into Heaven, many times the prayer is almost ended,

ended before we begin to pray. There is a Religious Duty but it must have some previous preparation: this is evident both

(1) *Pfal. 26.* by the light of (1) Scripture, and of (2) Nature, but Prayer requires it in a more especial manner: see how those two, Preparation and Prayer, are conjoyn'd, *Jer. 11. 13.*

and Nam. are full of *Scripturas* to the same purpose. (u) *Tu genitor cape jam manu patriasq; penates; Me bello è tanto digressum & corde recum Attrellare nefas, donec me flumine vivo - Abluero.* Virg. *Æn. 2.* *Procul hinc, procul este prophani, Conclamat vates, totoq; absistite loco.*

This is a trite Theam, and often inculcated therefore I shall pass it: only let me advise you, when ever you go to Prayer, (if your leisure will permit) to read first one or more Chapters in the Bible; and do not gallop over the Scripture when you read it, as the most do; but pause a little at the end of every Verse or Sentence, and whilst you pause, † Pray; the Scripture as you read it will put words into your mouth, and suggest

(†) *Leſſio-* meditations, which are fit matter for Prayer  
*nem fre-* unto your minds, though some parts of  
*quenter* Scripture, especially the *Pſalms*, are more  
*interrum-* apt for this purpose than others; and if a  
*pat oratio,* passage be obscure, put a mark upon it, and  
*& ani-* propose it to the next able Minister,  
*um jugi-* Christian thou meetest with to be resolved  
*ter adha-* and for the present, pray in *David's* la-  
*rentem Dio* grata vi-  
*grata vi-* cissitudo sancte orationis, accendat; Hieron. in Ep. (3) A  
*cissitudo sancte orationis, accendat;* Hieron. in Ep. (3) A  
course prevents idle and unprofitable discourse..

age, or to that purpose, that (2) God would (1) Psal.  
 open thine eyes to see and to understand the 119. 18.  
 profound things of his Law.

4. A fourth and further Help is this, to  
 have right conceptions of God all along the  
 duty; to conceive of him as he is, and as he  
 hath revealed himself in his Word to be.  
 This will greatly conduce to the quickning  
 of you. Conceive of him,

1. As of an omnipresent God; that he is  
 really; though not visibly present in all pla-  
 ces, and in that place where thou art a pray-  
 ing more particularly; that he sees thy heart  
 plainly as thou canst see thine own hands,  
 that he observeth thee as narrowly, as if  
 thou only wert alive in all the World, or as  
 thou alone of all the children of men wert  
 making thy supplication to him. Whenever  
 thou settest about this duty, (a) set God be-  
 fore thine eyes (as David did) and represent  
 him to thy self under this notion of an Om-  
 nipresent all-seeing God:

2. Conceive of God as one that is full of  
 Majesty and Greatness. That passage, in  
 Job. 6. 6. (*Wherewithall shall I come be-  
 fore the Lord, and bow my self before the  
 high God,*) doth intimate what apprehen-  
 sions we should have of God when we come  
 into his presence; viz. That he is a High  
 God, infinitely above any of his Creatures;  
 far above him and the holy Angels, or the  
 highest of the Children of Men, there is a

(a) How  
 would you  
 pray if  
 men were  
 present to  
 see and  
 hear you?  
*Sic loqueri  
 cum Deo  
 quasi ho-  
 mines ad-  
 stant. Je-  
 noca.*

wider difference than betwixt the Potter and his clay. Oh how would this apprehension both quicken and awe us in Prayer!

3. Conceive of God as one that is exceeding gracious and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon him. That known Scripture, *Heb. 11. 6.* (*He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him,*) doth hint what conceptions we should have of God in Prayer, as of one that is exceeding bountiful: we must believe not only his Being, but his Bounty: he gives not only what we ask, but more; yea (b) abundantly more than we can ask. Oh what quickning and confidence doth this notion of God afford! To apprehend God in his greatness doth (c) stir up fear and godly reverence: to apprehend God in his goodness, doth stir up Faith and holy boldness. God who is our Father, likes that we his Children should come before him in this manner; he gives us leave (so we do it awfully) to (d) speak all our minds to him. 'Tis said of *Flavius* the Emperour, that he would not that any man should present a Petition to him (as if he were offering meat to a Lion or Elephant) with a trembling hand: God likes that we the great God, and with such confidence as became one that spake to his Father or Friend. (d) *Eph. 3. 12.* *μὴ φοβούμεθα* *Proprie est libertas dicendi, et non omne, & quod dicitur.*

(b) *Eph.*

3. 20.

*ὡς ἐκ*

*πλεονείας,*

*Supra*

*quam re-*

*dundantur.*

(c) *Vitus*

*Tibull.* says

of *Liber*:

That he

pray'd

with such

reverence

as became

one that

spake to

the great God,

and with such confidence

as became one that

spake to his Father or Friend.

(d) *Eph. 3. 12.*

*μὴ φοβούμεθα*

*Proprie est libertas dicendi, et non omne, & quod dicitur.*

should

should lift up our hands to him, *as without wrath, so also (e) without doubting.*

4. Conceive of God in prayer as one God, *(f)* not divided, and yet distinguished into three Persons, the Father, Son, and Spirit. This is a great mystery, fitter for admiration than humane conception; and yet all along this duty God must be thus apprehended, as one Substance in three Subsistences; as one Essence in three Relations: all which do concur to the prayers of Believers, and have a different office about them; there is the Father hearing, the Son interceding, and the Spirit helping their infirmities.

Lastly, conceive of God not *(g)* absolutely, but in *Christ*: God in himself is a consuming fire, but in *Christ* he is a merciful Father. *(h)* *There is no coming to God but by him.* I might enlarge upon this head, but I forbear; only remember this, you will never pray to any purpose unless you carry along with you in your minds, a right notion and conception of that God to whom you pray.

5. Entertain and maintain very honourable thoughts of the duty of prayer it self: this will both move you to the Duty, and marvellously quicken you in it. What the *(i)* *Psalmist* says of the City of God, that may I say of the duty of prayer, *Great and* Father holding that his darling in his bosom, and thereby he appeased the Kings wrath. *(i)* *Psal: 87. 3.*

*(e)* 1 Tim. 2. 8.

*(f)* Vide Dr. Hall Dica. 3. Ep. 7.

*(g)* Luther was wont to say, *No- lo Deum absolutum.* Hebr. 12. ult.

*(h)* Hebr. 7. 25. *Thermistocl.* under- standing that King *Admettus*

was angry with him, took his young Son in his arms, and treated with the

glorious things are spoken of it. If any should ask me as that King did the Prophets Servant, (k) *What great things hath thy Master done?* So what great things hath Prayer done? it would require more lines than I intend in all, to return a full answer. I might easily write a large history of the great exploits that Prayer hath done in the World. You read *Heb. 11.* of many wonderful effects of Faith, the effects and fruits of Prayer are as many, and as great. It hath (l) *Obtained promises, subdued Kingdoms turned to flight the armies of aliens; it hath raised the dead, stopp'd the Suns course, yea made it to go back. It hath opened prison doors, and unlockt such secrets as have puzzled the Devil himself; it hath disappointed the plots of adversaries, and tumbled those into the pit themselves which they have maliciously digged for others. What shall I say more? it hath (m) opened Heaven, and shut it again. These and such like memorable things have been brought to pass by the Prayers of such sinful and infirm Creatures as we our selves are.*

Let me add this, it hath laid hold on God himself; and put him (as one says) to a merciful retreat, when he hath been marching in his anger against persons or People. *Jacob by prayer (n) had power with God, and by wrestling with him, (o) wrested mercy*

(4) King.  
8. 4.

(1) Dan. 9.  
2, 3, 4.

Ha. 37.15,  
16, etc.

John 2. 1,  
2. &c.

Josh. 10.  
12, 14.

Act. 12. 5  
Dan. 2. 18

2 Sam. 15  
31. Esth.

4. 16.  
(m) lam.

5. 17, 18.

Ἡλίας  
ἀνθρώπου  
τοῦ ὁμοιο-  
παθούς ἡ-  
μῶν, iisdem  
afflictioni-  
bus obno-  
tium.

(\*) Hof.

10

12. 3. (a) *Colinus irroratus*, & *misericordiam* exten-

from



from him. God speaks as if his hands were held and tyed up by Prayer; *Let me go*, saith he, to *Jacob*; and to *Moses*, (p) *Let me alone*. (q) One observes that God in *Exod.* 32. 10. doth indent as it were with *Moses*, and offer him composition, if he would hold his peace: *Let me alone*, saith he, *and I will make of thee a great People*; Wonderful is that passage (r) (if we read it right) in *Isa.* 45. 11. there God says, *Concerning the works of my hands command ye me*. These and the like expressions are to be admired, says the same Author, not strained, lest our thoughts degenerate into rude blasphemy: certainly they are mighty condescensions, wherein the Lord would signifie to us the great Power and Efficacy of Prayer.

I might bring many Scriptures and arguments to evince the prevalence of Prayer: but this is a common argument, and therefore I shall decline it. Onely consult *Matth.* 21. 22. where *Christ* says that *all things whatsoever we ask in prayer, believing, we shall receive*. This one Promise is enough of it self to quicken the deadeft soul that is, in prayer, and *Christ's* manner of speaking here is observable; it had been (one would have thought) enough to have said, *All things ye ask in prayer ye shall receive*; but here he adds, *all things whatsoever*. It seems to be a tautology: we don't speak in our ordinary discourse, I will give you all things what-

(p) Aug.  
on *Exod.*

32. 10.  
thus glos-  
seth, *Do-  
mine, quis  
tenet te?*  
&c.

(q) Man-  
ton on *Ja.*  
5. 85.

(r) Some  
read it in-  
terroga-  
tively,  
thus,

*Concerning  
the works  
of my hands  
command  
ye me?*

(f) 'Tis  
Mr. Bur-  
roughs his  
glosse in  
one of his  
Books.

whatsoever you ask. But this is not without its signification; *All things* (f) (says one) is a promise of generals, and *whatsoever* relates to particulars. 'Tis as if he had said, Not only all things in general, but every particular thing that you ask you shall receive; for though it be true that generals include particulars, yet such is the unbelief of our hearts, that though we assent to Promises in the general, yet when it comes to particulars, we hold off, and fear they will not be made good to us. Hereto I might add that speech of *Christ* to the Woman of *Canaan*; (t) *Be it unto thee as thou wilt*, he seems to give her a blank, and bids her write down what she pleaseth.

(t) It was  
said of Lu-  
ther, *Iste*  
*vir apud*  
*Deum po-*  
*nit quod*  
*voluit.*

Peruse  
that full  
Scripture  
1 John 5.  
14, 15.

(u) *δεχομεν*  
*χρησ-*  
*του εως*  
Jam. 5. 17.

(w) *Εὐχῆς*  
*δαιας* *αὐ-*  
*τῶν* *ο*  
*Θεῶν.* Me-  
nander.

(x) So was *Solomon's*, 1 Kings 8. 59. and so is every believers.

in

in his view night and day; he gives the thing desired (y) or something that is better. (y) *Nemo parvi pendat orationem suam, dica enim vobis, quod ipsa ad quem oramus, non parvi pendit eam. Postquam egressa est ab ore nostro, ipse scribit eam in libro suo, & unum in duobus indubitanter expectemus, aut dabit quod petimus, aut quod novit utilis.* Greg in Hom. super Evang.

6. Be much in the use of Ejaculatory Prayer. Reader, if thou shouldst not understand the word, I will suppose thee acquainted with the thing: 'tis a short yet serious lifting up the soul in desires unto God, upon any occasion whatsoever. These ejaculatory prayers are either vocal or mental only. If you read the Scripture, (z) you shall find (z) Gen. this way of praying very familiar with the best of men, yea with *Christ* himself. 43. 14. & 49. 18. Nehem. 2.

4. 5. Judg. 16. 28. 2 Sam. 15. 31. Luke 23. 42. John 12. 26, 27. Luke 20. 21. & 23. 34, 39. Qu. If this be not intended by David, when he says, Psalm 119. 164. *Seven times a day do I praise thee.*

I could offer many things to commend it to you; as thus.

1. 'Tis very acceptable to God: he hath testified his accepting by his answering such ejaculations as these. *David's* vocal ejaculation, *Turn (O Lord) I pray thee the counsel of Achitophel into foolishness*; And *Nehemiah's* mental ejaculation, *Nehe. 2. 4, 5.* had present audience.

2. 'Tis very easily performed; all times and places are alike to it: whether you are

B 4

alone,

alone or in company, at home or abroad, you may in this way make known your requests unto God.

3. 'Tis an excellent means to keep the heart always in a heavenly frame: It helps you also to improve every Ordinance and Providence of God.

But lastly, which makes to our purpose, 'tis of special use to dispose us for solemn and (a) continued prayer. They that often in the day are thus lifting up their hearts to God, have them in tune when they betake themselves to that more solemn service. Praying thoughts and desires are with them in a readinels: these short breathings do prepare them for a longer race. They that are good (says one) at these running pulls and trips, must needs wrestle well with God. A candle that is just now put out, is soon lighted again: whilst the heart still glows, and is warm with these short Ejaculations, 'tis readily kindled and quickned in solemn secret Prayer.

(a) *Vide*  
Mr. Gurn-  
all's 3<sup>d</sup> part  
of his Com-  
pleat Chri-  
stian Ar-  
mour, pag.  
387. ■

It was a  
speech of  
a dying  
Saint, That  
he was go-  
ing to  
change his  
place, but  
not his  
company.

A Chri-  
stian that  
is frequent  
in these  
Ejaculati-  
ons, when  
he goes to  
pray more

solemnly, he goes from God to God; from a more transient view of him to a more fixed, &c.

7. Another help is this: Keep your heart close to the duty, and suffer it not to stray or wander. A straying heart must needs be a straitned and a dead heart in Prayer. How can a Christian have a lively and enlarged heart in a Duty, when he hath no heart at all there? but that is

(b) stragling in this and that corner of the earth: whilst he is speaking to God, his heart is conversing with the World, inso-  
 much that he forgets many times in pray-  
 er what he spake last. (c) Oh what an indignity is offered unto GOD! and how he mockt by such praying as this! We would have him attend to our prayers, when we do not attend to them our-  
 selves.

(b) *Quasi nobis esset sermo cum homine vulgari inter orandum, o-misso Deo, huc vel illuc transvola-mus.* Calv. Inst. l. 4.

Vain thoughts in prayer are occasioned partly by the desperate wickedness and de-sertfulness of our own hearts; thence they do proceed as *Christ* shews, and that as freely as water from a fountain; and partly by the subtilty and malice of *Satan*; he being a Spirit hath ready access to thy Spi-rit, and thou never goest aside to pray but he follows thee at the heels; and seeing he cannot divert thee from, his desire is to distract thee in the duty. Sometimes he injects such thoughts as are directly sinful, or if he finds that these affright thee (as many times a Christian starts at these as at some ghostly apparition) then he casts such as are at other times

(c) *Mag-nam injuri-am Deo fa-cio, cum pre-cor ut meas preces exau-diat, quas ego qui fun-do non ex-audio. De-precar illum ut mihi in-tendat, ego vero nec mi-bi nec illi intendo.*

times allowable and lawful; or if he sees that these are unwelcome, then he injects such thoughts as are in themselves good and useful; only they are impertinent: these he steals out of the heart again for the most part before the prayer is ended: though at other times he would oppose them, yet now he puts them forward as those that are most likely to find entertainment in thy soul. I suppose thy experience will let thee set thy seal to this as true.

Now, if thou wouldst have thy heart enlivened and enlarged in prayer, remember to repel every vain or impertinent thought that comes in to thy disturbance: resist it; rise upon it; call help from Heaven against it. This is one fence we are to put upon the

(d) Ephes. Apostles (d) *watching unto prayer.* If at  
6. 18.

(e) Tis Mr. slip. (e) As you do with your Children, so  
*Garnals*  
*compari-*  
*son in lib.*  
*prædit.*  
you had need to do with your childish  
minds; happily they go along with you to  
Church, but when you are set (if not awed  
by your eye) they steal forth and are gone;  
and it may be are playing all Sermon-time,  
or a good part of it, and you miss them not;  
to prevent this, you set them before you, and  
have an eye to them. You can apply it.

Remember this advice whenever you go  
to prayer; renew your resolution to watch  
against

must vain thoughts; think how many  
 ways they have (f) marr'd already; re- (f) *Si va-*  
 ge, that through grace, they shall not *getur mens*  
 and this also. *nostra, nul-*  
*lam è pre-*

Let the guilt of no one sin ly upon thy  
 conscience; that will so clog, dilquiet and  
 check thy spirit in prayer, that thou wilt  
 not be able to proceed with any life or en-  
 joyment. Guilt makes a Christian shy of  
 coming into the presence of God, as a faulty  
 Pet. Mart.

It plays least in sight, and steals away to  
 be before the time, being loth to come  
 where his father is. So it is with a Christian,  
 who is conscious to himself of any fault or sin  
 which he hath knowingly committed against  
 God; and as he is little else to come to pray-

so he is lifeless in the duty; his sin flies in  
 his face, so that he can't lift it up with any  
 confidence: his heart upbraids him, and falls  
 travelling with him, and says, What hast  
 thou to do to take Gods Name into thy  
 mouth, &c? if therefore thou wouldst pray  
 thou desirest, preserve thy conscience  
 pure and peaceable; Take heed of known  
 sins.

(b) of departing wilfully or wickedly (as  
 the phrase is) from God. There is (1) a  
 sin weakly, or through weakness; this  
 does not ordinarily interrupt a Christians  
 communion; and there is a sinning wickedly, or  
 through wickedness; (so (k) Jude speaks of  
 committing ungodly deeds ungodly) this  
 wastes the conscience; this destroys a  
 Christians

(g) *Tunc*  
*cor fiduci-*  
*am in ora-*  
*tione accipit*  
*quam sibi*  
*vita nulla*  
*pravitatis*  
*contradicit.*  
 Greg. in  
 Mor.

(b) Psal.  
 18. 21.

(i) *Pecata*  
*quotidianæ*  
*incursumis,*  
*& vastan-*  
*tia consci-*  
*entiam.*

(k) Jud. 5.

Christians peace, and deadens his heart in duty: Oh! beware of sinning after this manner! if thou must abstain from every appearance of evil, then much more from every apparent evil! Oh fly from it when it comes near thee in a temptation, as thou wouldst do from a venomous serpent; shake it off as thou wouldst do an ugly toad that is crawling upon thee: Observe (1) *Eliphaz* his advice to *Job*, which is, to put iniquity far from him; not to come near it; and then, say he, thou shalt lift up thy face to God, and make thy prayer unto him: Thou shalt make many and mighty prayers; (as the (m) word there signifies) thou shalt not only use words in prayers, but words cloathed with power: thou shalt be able to pray, and to pour forth strong prayers in abundance unto God.

(1) *Job* 24.  
22. with  
26. 27.

(m) *רבו*  
*multiplica-*  
*vit, proprie*  
*verba fortia*  
*in oratione*  
*tum multa*  
*copia fudit.*

*Quest.* But if sin hath already wounded my conscience and broken my peace, am I not to refrain prayer till it be healed again?

*Ans.* No; for this is not to mend the matter, but to make it worse. You cannot heal the wound of one sin by another: you must to *Christ* by Faith, and to God by prayer; and though there be a present darkness, yet ply the Throne of Grace, till the Lord speak peace to thy soul: and remember to do this presently; the sooner, the better: let not the Sun go down upon the breach betwixt God and thee: New breaches are made up better than long quarrels; and

grow



rt in wounds are healed easier than old

It will not a little help in this case, if  
are provided beforehand both with  
er, and a method in prayer. I observe  
Christians are straitned in this duty,  
only from the naughtiness of their heart,  
from the emptiness of their heads; as  
etimes (like *Zebedees Children*) they ask  
know not what; so at other times they  
know not what to ask: They are often word-  
ed, (if I may so speak) and at a loss; they  
not tell how to go forwards, and there-  
they go backwards, and vent them-  
es in vain repetitions. Now this great  
will be in part prevented, if they be sto-  
beforehand with matter for prayer, and  
they do observe a method in the duty.

Possibly upon the first reading of this Di-  
ction, you may reject it, as that which  
out the immediate suggestions of the  
heart, and tends to formality; but weigh it  
and you will be of another mind: Take  
upon the word of one that hath prov'd it;  
of admirable use to quicken and enlarge  
heart in prayer; because from hence  
is a continual supply of fresh matter,  
want of which (your experience tells  
that) you are exceedingly dulled and  
stagnated. 'Tis true, sometime (and oh that  
were so always!) we have such abundant  
aidance, such ravishing incomes from the  
Spirit

Spirit of God, that we stand in no need of any such help as this here offer'd; our spirits are so raised, our affections are so up, we are carried out so beyond our selves, that we cannot be bounded by any premeditated matter or method; but our hearts are now always like the Chariots of *Aminadab*, but too often like the Chariots of *Pharaoh*; we drive on but heavily, for the most part, in this duty; and at such times this direction may have its use.

In order to storing our selves with matter and method for Prayer, it would not be amiss, if you had heads, and common places for your minds, (or rather in writing) to which you might refer such Scriptures and considerations, as do occur in Meditation by your selves, in conference with others, in reading or hearing the Word of God. Hitherto also you might refer the sins you have committed, the mercies you have receiv'd, the wants you would have supplied, the lusts you would have subdued, &c. There should be some part of every days work to collect fit matter for prayer: This is another way of watching thereunto; what Ministers do to fit themselves for preaching, that Christians should do to fit themselves for praying. They put all things they meet with (which may be of use) under their proper heads in Books which they have for that purpose, that they may readily have recourse

discourse thereto, whenever they have occasion. And so your collections must not be set down confusedly, but methodically and in order; else you will be to seek when you should make use thereof.

It would do well also if Christians would observe a method in their prayers throughout; this is of singular use to those who pray with others; because confused repetitions, and disorderly digressions cannot but dislike and deaden those that joyn with them; and

is not altogether useless in secret prayer; be it now a man can never be at a stand, besides still there will be an orderly succession which matter, which serves greatly to quicken and excite the heart and affections, as I

have already hinted. (n) The Lords prayer, which is the standard or standing pattern

of prayer, is very excellent (as many have deserved) for method as well as matter;

whereby doubtless *Christ* would intimate plainly, that the one is useful as well as the

others.

Consult Dr. *Wilkins* his Discourse concerning the Gift of Prayer; there you will meet with an exact Method to be observed in prayer: Prayer by him is divided into two parts; 1. Less principal, viz. A Preface, apt Transitions, and the Conclusion: 2. More principal: 1. Confession; 2. Petition; 3. Thanksgiving: There you will find also schemes of these three more principal parts of Prayer.

You'll say, This advice cannot be put into practice without great pains and care, and

(n) Dr. Gouge his Guide to go to God. Lambertus Dancus de Oratione Dominica.

to

to me there seems no such need of it; for doubtless God is not taken with method or words in prayer, his eye is upon the heart, and he observes its motion more than the motion of the tongue.

*Ans.* This is most true; and therefore it is not propounded as that which will affect or take with God, but as a means to quicken and enlarge our selves. And yet I must tell you too, that though the words we speak and the method we use do not affect God; yet to bespeak him in a confused, careless, empty manner, cannot but offend him. I am sure it is very unbecoming the solemnity of the duty, and contrary to that reverence we owe unto the Divine Majesty. He that requires us to take heed how we hear when he speaks to us, doth look that we should take as (o) great heed what we say when we speak unto him. Weigh Solomon's caution, Eccl. 5. 2. *Let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before the Lord.* 'Tis you know the tongue's office to utter, and the heart's to conceive; why is it then said, *Let not thy heart be hasty to utter?* Because the heart should not suffer the tongue to utter what it had not first conceived and concocted. The reason of this caution is taken from the consideration of that infinite distance betwixt God and us: He is an *Holy and holy God that inhabiteth Eternity*; and thou (as (p) Bernard expresseth it) a vile Toad creeping

(o) *Nescit  
penitenda  
loqui qui  
proferenda  
prius tra-  
didit exa-  
mini. Cass.  
l. 10. ep. 4.*

(p) *E pa-  
ludē suā  
procedens  
& repens  
vilis ra-  
nuncula.*

creeping and crawling out of its ditch; *He is in Heaven, and thou upon the Earth, therefore thy words should be few.* Why should our words be few? what! is God against long praying? No, surely, he is not tyred with the length, nor taken with the shortness of our prayers; but the reason of the clause is this, Because they who speak but little, do ponder what they say. Our tongues when we speak to Men (much less when we speak to *GOD*) should not run before our wit. We *should choose our words to reason with God* (as (q) Job speaks.) As we (q) Job 9. must beware of curiolsity, so also of care- 14. lessness in those words which we utter before God in prayer. God ponders our words, and therefore we have reason to do it our selves.

10. The tenth Direction shall consist of three or four particulars, which are prudential only, and may seem (till prov'd) little profitable.

1. Choose and use that gesture of Body which may serve best to quicken and excite thy Spirit in this Service. And here I must premise, that there is no bodily gesture in prayer commanded by God, he hath left that to the prudence and piety of his People: therefore if you read the Scripture, you shall find the Saints of God to have used all the postures of the Body in this duty: indeed, kneeling hath been most in  
C practice,

(r) Psalm practice, that is a posture of great reverence, and it is put (r) sometimes for the 95. 6. duty of prayer it self; not that it is essential  
A signo

*rem denotat, non quod oratio semper requirat genuflexionem, sed quoniam hoc reverentiae signum communiter adhibeatur, praesertim ubi non perfunctoria est sed seria oratio. Col. in locum.*

(f) Mat.

26. 39.

Josh. 7.

6.

(t) 2 Sam.

7. 18.

(u) 1 Kings

8. 22.

2 Chron.

20. 9.

(w) Gen.

24. 63.

Hebrew

רץ

which signifies,

as

to meditate,

so

to pray.

*Vide Chald. and Genev. Translation, and Tremell.*

tial to it, for you shall see the People of God in other postures at prayer; sometimes you read of their (f) prostrating themselves, or lying with their faces upon the ground; sometimes again you read of their (t) sitting; sometimes of their (u) standing, and sometimes of their (w) walking. This last gesture, though least in use, yet some have found it useful. Kneeling doth often dispose to sleep and drowsiness, which standing or walking doth prevent: and surely that gesture is most eligible, which is found most effectual to keep off indisposition, or to dispose and fit a person for duty.

Nay, my opinion is, that variety of gestures, may be both lawful and useful at some times in this exercise. Surely Christians may take that liberty when alone, which would be unseemly in the presence of others. They may now kneel, and anon stand, and then walk; and so turn from one gesture

gesture to another, as they find it will be more helpful to them for the end already mentioned. Yea, I doubt not, but in case of great straitness upon their Spirits, they may make a stand or pause till they have by meditation recovered some new matter to continue the duty : They may turn from prayer to reading, and from reading again to prayer; from prayer to meditation, and from meditation again to prayer, as they see good. *Jerome* doth some where relate, how that finding himself sluggish and dead in prayer, he left speaking to God, and fell a speaking to his own heart: *Think, O my Soul,* says he, *did Daniel thus pray when he was in the Lions den? or Jonah when he was in the Whales belly? Did the penitent Thief thus pray when he was upon the Cross? &c.* And then he tells us that he went to prayer afresh, when he had first roused up himself by these and such like considerations.

2. Choose such a place to pray in as is most convenient for this duty. Find out such a place (if thou canst) where thou mayest not be disturbed by any noise in thine ears, nor be diverted by any object before thine eyes. *When thou prayest,* says Christ, *enter into thy Closet:* This counsel of Christ doth intimate, That Christians when they pray should have respect to the place in which they pray; the more close, the more convenient. He adviseth further to shut the

C 2

door;

door; lest the wind of Vain-glory should come in thereat. Our secret seeking of God should not be open or visible to any else but God. 'Tis true when *Daniel* pray'd, *he set his window open*, but it was to shew his Faith, (as one observes) not his pride.

Some may say, This rule doth not reach us; we have no variety of Rooms to retire into; poor People and servants, and such like will be ready to say, We have no choice.

But to such I would reply, Is there no Garden, nor Grove, nor Field near you, into which you may withdraw? Why cannot you with *Isaac*, go forth at eventide, or in the morning to meditate and to pray? (x) Read what *Christ* did, *Mark* 1. 35. and surely 'tis recorded for our imitation; 'tis said, *That in the morning a great while before day he arose, and departed into a solitary place to pray.*

(x) Vide  
Luke 5.  
16. & 6.  
12. & 22.  
41.  
Matth. 14.  
23.

3. It may conduce to the quickning of thee to use thy voice in secret prayer. Not that God is taken with words, a few sincere sighs from the heart do more affect him than the most Rhetorical expressions of the tongue. But though words do not move God in prayer, yet experience teacheth, they sometime move him that prayes. The Church says in the *Lamentations*, that her eye did affect her heart: the same can many



a Christian say of his (y) tongue, that it (y) *Verbis*  
serves to affect and quicken his heart in this *opus est*  
duty. *inter oran-*  
*dum ad ex-*

*citandas nos; alioquin Deus verbis non indiget. Aretius. Vox in-*  
*terdum non absque fructu adhibetur, quoniam in precibus non-*  
*nunquam languescimus, & animus ipse defatigatur; unde vox in-*  
*terposita nos excitat, & quodammodo reficit. Pet. Mart. loci com-*  
*munes, Claf. 3. cap. 13.*

Here I had need to give this caution, That  
as Christians should not pray to be seen of  
Men, so they should not speak in prayer to  
be heard of Men: If such are not Hypocrites,  
yet they will hardly escape the censure of  
Hypocrisie.

These ten are the principal helps and  
directions (according to the knowledge and  
experience that I have) for the lively perfor-  
mance of this great duty of secret prayer: I  
might offer more, but that I have already  
exceeded the ordinary limits of a Letter.  
Onely remember this, to be thoroughly sen-  
sible of those things for which thou makest  
thy prayer unto God. This alone may  
quicken thee. How affectionately do they  
ask an alms, who see they must starve with-  
out it? Deadness in prayer ariseth from  
want of a deep sense of thy wants.

Remember also to set their examples be-  
fore your eyes, who have performed this  
duty with life, enlargement, and importunity.  
Think you saw Jacob (2) *wrestling with God,*  
and putting forth all his strength in prayer.

(2) Gen.  
32. 24.  
Hof. 12. 3.

Think you saw *Elias* praying earnestly, and

(a) *1 Kings* (a) *putting his face between his knees.* Imagine  
18. 42. you saw *Christ* groveling upon the ground

(b) *Hebr.* in the Garden, (b) *offering up supplications,*  
5. 1. *with strong cryes and tears*; repeating that

(c) *Matth.* request again and again, (c) *Father, if it be*  
26. 34. *possible, let this cup pass from me.* Call to mind

the poor Widdows importunity or impu-

dence, (as the word signifies) who would  
(d) *Magis* have no nay. (d) Examples fway with us  
*ducimur* more sometimes than any rules or precepts.

*exemplis* If none of all this will help thee, then fall  
*quam pra-* down before God, bewailing thy deadness,  
*ceptis.* confessing thy sluggishness: say (as they in

(e) *Isaiah* *Isaiah*) (e) *I have not called upon God, nor*  
64. 7. *stirred up my self to take hold of him.* O how

like a dead dog am I before the Lord! Will

the living God accept of such dead duties as

mine are? Oh how justly may God be an-

gry with, and shut out my prayers! (f) By

(f) *Qui*  
*frigidè ro-*  
*gar, docet*  
*negare.*

my coldness in asking, I even prompt God

to deny me.

Yea, not only bemoan, but chide thy  
self: say; Why art thou so dead, O my Soul,

and why art thou so sottish within me?  
(g) *Judges* Rouse up thy self (g) as *Deborah* did: Say,  
5. 12. *Awake, awake, O my Soul, awake, awake:*

Bespeak thy self, as the Shipmaster did the  
(h) *Jonah* Prophet *Jonah*: (h) *What meanest thou; O*  
1. 6. *sluggard, arise, call upon thy God.*

Lastly, Lift up strong cryes (mingled  
with tears, if thou canst) unto God, that he

would

would lend his helping hand, as *David* did, *Psal. 80. 18. Quicken me, O Lord, so call upon thy Names.* Send thy quickening Spirit into my heart. How (i) oft doth *David* make (i) Ten times, this request in the 119 Psalm! ever now and then this request comes in; *Quicken me, O Lord: Quicken me according to thy word: Quicken me according to thy righteousness: Quicken me for thy Names sake, &c.* 'Tis not a vain repetition, but a plain manifestation, both of his great need and of his earnest desire of this Blessing.

*Mr. Baxter's 15 Directions about the like case; see his Christ. Direct. p. 597.*

*Qu.* How should a Christian keep up an ordinary fervency in prayer? *Question.*

*Ans.* 1. See that Knowledge and Faith provide you matter: for as the fire will go out if there be not fuel; so fervency will decay, when you are dry, and scarce know what to say; or do not well believe what you understand. 2. Clog not the body either with over-much eating and drinking, or over-tiring labours: For an active Body helpeth much the activity of the mind: And the holiest person will be able but poorly to exercise his fervency, under a dull or languishing Body. 3. Rush not suddenly upon prayer, out of a crowd of other businesses, or before your last worldly cares or discourses be washed clean out of your minds. How to keep up fervency in prayer.

In Study and Prayer how certain a truth is it, that Non bene fit quod occupato animo fit, ( Hieron. Epist. 143. ad Paulin. ) That work is not well done, which is done with a mind that is prepossessed, or busied about other matters ; That mind must be wholly free from all other present thoughts or business, that will either pray or study well. 4. Keep a tender heart and conscience that is not senseless of your own concernments : For all your prayers must needs be sleepy, if the heart and conscience be once hardened, seared or fallen asleep. 5. Take more pains with your hearts than with your tongues. Remember that the success of your work lyeth most on them. Bear not with their sluggishness : Do by them as you would do by your Child or Servant that sleepeth by you at prayer : You will not let them snort on, but jog them till you have awakened them. So do by your hearts when you find them dull. 6. Live as in the continual presence of God ; but labour to apprehend his special presence when you are about to speak to him : Ask your hearts how they would behave themselves if they saw the Lord, or but the lowest of his holy Angels ? 7. Let Faith be called up to see Heaven and Hell as open all the while before you ; and such a sight will surely keep you serious. 8. Keep Death and Judgment in your continual remembrance and expectation : Remember how all your prayers will be lookt back upon. Look not for long life : Remember that this prayer for ought you know

now may be your last : but certainly you have  
 not long to pray. Pray therefore as a dying  
 Man should do. 9. Study well the unspeakable  
 necessity of your Souls : If you prevail not for  
 pardon, and grace, and preservation, you are  
 undone and lost for ever. Remember that ne-  
 cessity is upon you, and Heaven or Hell are  
 at the end, and you are praying for more than  
 thousand lives. 10. Study well the unspeak-  
 able excellency of those mercies which you pray  
 for : O think how blessed a life it would be if  
 you could know God more, and love him more,  
 and live a blameless heavenly Life ; and then  
 how wish Christ in Heaven for ever ? Study  
 these mercies till the flames of Love put life in-  
 to your prayers. 11. Study well the exceeding  
 encouragements that you have to pray and hope :  
 If your Hope decay, your Fervour will decay.  
 Think of the unconceivable Love of God, the  
 astonishing mercy shewed to you in your Re-  
 demption, and in the helps of the Holy Spirit, and  
 how Christ is now interceeding for you : Think  
 of these till Faith make glad your heart : And  
 in this gladness let praise and Thanksgiving  
 be ordinarily no small share in your prayers :  
 For it will tire out the heart to be always pore-  
 ing on its own distempers, and discourage it to  
 rest on nothing but its infirmities : And then  
 that discouraged temper will not be so lively a  
 temper, as a thankful, praiseful, joyful tem-  
 per is : For *Lætitia loquax res est, atque  
 contentatrix sui* : Gladness is a very expressive  
 thing,

Symmach.  
Epist. 31.  
l. 1. ad  
Aulon.

thing, and apt to shew it self, *But, Tristis non eloquentes sunt; maxime si ad ægritudinem animi accedat corporis ægritudo. Hieronym. Epist. 31. ad Theophil. Alexand.* Sad Men are seldom eloquent; especially if the Body be sick as well as the Mind. 12. *Let the Image of a praying and a bleeding Christ and of his praying Saints be (not on a wall before your eyes, but) engraven on your minds: Is it not desirable to be conformed to them? Had they more need to pray importunately than you? 13. Be very cautelous in the use of forms, lest you grow dull and customary, and before you are aware your tongues use to go without your hearts. The heart is apt to take its ease when it feeleth not some urgent instigation. And though the presence of God should serveturn without the regard of Man, yet with imperfect Men, the heart is best held to its duty when both concur. And therefore most are more cautelous of their words, than of their thoughts: As children will learn their Lesson better when they know their Masters will hear them it, than when they think he will not. Now in the use of a Form of prayer, a sleepy heart is not at all discerned by Man but by God only: For the words are all brought to your hand, and may be said by the most dull and careless mind: But when you are put to express your own desire, without such helps, you are necessitated to be so mindful of what you do, as to form your desires into apt expressions, or else*

or dulness or inattentiveness will be observed  
 by Men: and you will be like one that  
 with his Coach, or Horse, or Crutches taken  
 from him, that if he have legs must use them, or  
 else lye still. And to them that are able, it is  
 a great benefit, to be necessitated to use  
 the ability they have: Though to others it is a  
 to be deprived of their helps. I speak not  
 against the lawfulness of a form of pray-  
 er; but to warn you of the temptations which  
 are in that way. 14. Joyn oft with the most  
 serious fervent Christians: For their fervour  
 will help your hearts to burn, and carry you  
 along with them. 15. Destroy not fervency by  
 adulterating it, and turning it into an affected  
 earnestness of speech, and loudness of voice,  
 when it is but an hypocritical cover for a frozen  
 empty heart.

reader; if by these hints thou art any  
 way help't to pray: Then remem-  
 ber the *Author* in thy Prayers.

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FINIS.

\*\*\*\*\*  
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